

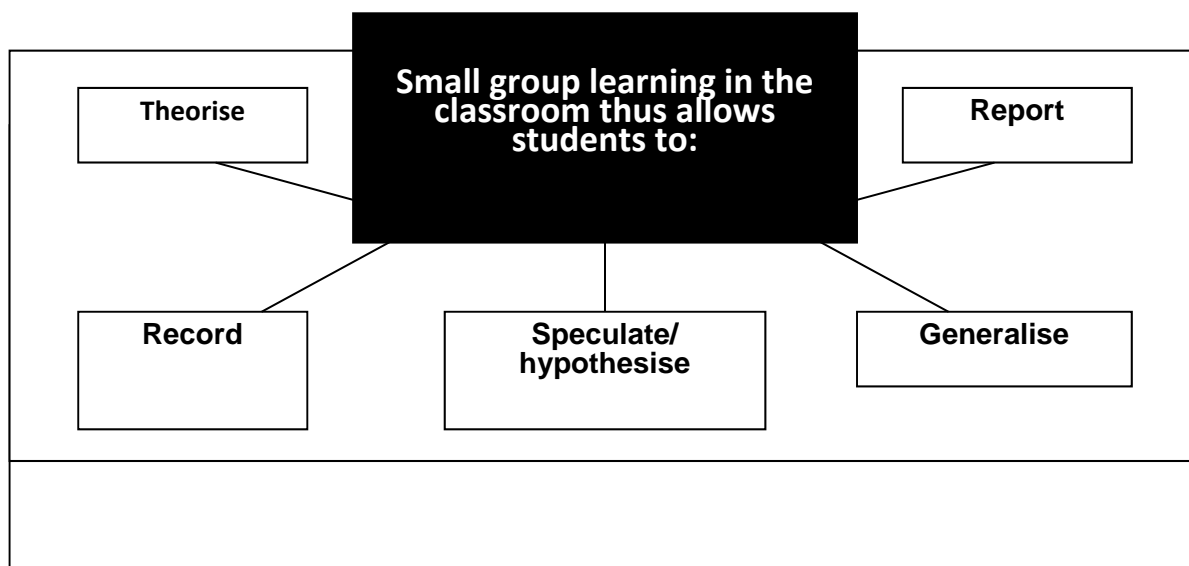
The importance of Oral Interaction

Oral interaction is a significant factor in language development. A classroom program that is supportive of second language learning does not limit itself to the IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) patterns of interaction. It includes learning activities that employ varied interactional patterns allowing students to question, hypothesise, clarify and negotiate. This is important for language learning because producing spoken language encourages learners to process the language more deeply than is required when they simply listen. It stretches learner language in a way that listening alone does not. This type of language production can be encouraged through group work.

Group work and second language learning

Group work has a number of advantages over whole class work for language learning.

1. Learners hear more language, a greater variety of language, and have more language directed toward them: group-work situations increase the input to the learner.
2. Learners interact more with other speakers, and therefore their output is also increased. They tend to take more turns, and in the absence of the teacher have more responsibility for clarifying their own meanings. In other words, it is the learners themselves who are doing the language learning work.
3. What learners hear and what they learn is contextualised: language is heard and used in an appropriate context and used meaningfully for a particular purpose.
4. Group work supports comprehension because it gives learners several opportunities to hear similar ideas expressed in a number of ways. Students are allowed to ask questions, exchange information and solve problems. Words are repeated, ideas are rephrased, problems are restated and meanings are refined. Pauline, G. *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning*, p 17-18



Communicative activities

Communicative activities provide students with the opportunity to hear and use language. They use pair and group organisation to develop oral language across the modes through purposeful interaction between learners. They can be used to:

- teach KLA content
- develop vocabulary
- build up field knowledge in preparation for writing
- support ESL learning by providing access to KLA content
- encourage ESL students' oral language use
- encourage interaction and cooperation among student

The examples of communicative activities on the following pages can be adapted by teachers for use across year levels and KLAs

Examples of communicative examples

Barrier tasks

Barrier tasks may be devised using visual information (eg pictures, tables, graphs) written text, real objects or a combination of the above.

Two students or two pairs of students are separated by a physical barrier, such as a folder or school bag. Students on either side of the barrier are provided with incomplete information and must communicate across the barrier in order to complete the task, without showing their information to each other. When students have completed the task they remove the barrier to check their answers. Following are examples of barrier tasks for a range of KLAs:

i. Giving and following instructions

Language focus: questioning, explaining, describing, clarifying and correcting

Description of activity: Students work in pairs. Each student has identical wooden blocks, lego blocks or plastic picture tiles. One student arranges blocks in a pattern behind the barrier and then gives instructions to his/her partner who is required to duplicate the pattern.

ii Directed drawing

Language focus: This activity can be used to consolidate and review knowledge of Mathematical shapes and dimensions, its terminology and directional language

Description of activity: Each student needs two pieces of graph paper

Directed drawing – Three dimension shapes

Student A

Take turns in giving and reviewing instructions. First, you must explain to your partner how to draw the triangular prism on his/her empty graph paper. Secondly, follow your partner's instructions and draw the second object on your graph paper.

Student B

Take turns in giving and reviewing instructions. First, you must follow your partner's instructions on how to draw an object on your empty graph paper. Secondly, give instructions to your partner on how to draw the cylinder on his/her blank graph paper.

iii. **Information Gap**

Language focus: Building field knowledge and subject vocabulary through questioning, explaining, describing, clarifying and correcting

Description of activity: Students take turns to ask questions of their partner to fill in the gaps on their own sheets, eg, What is the temperature on Mercury?

When they have completed this there may be some gaps left. The students can then work co-operatively in pairs to complete the table with answers given below (copied and cut up into separate pieces of paper).

iv **Barrier game**

Barrier Game - definitions

This activity was used at the end of a teaching sequence to identify definitions of key concepts taught. The aim was to consolidate and review students' understanding of terminology in preparation for identifying new concepts in the next lesson. It can be adapted for use to review the concepts and terminology of other units of work particularly mathematics

v. **Spot the difference**

Language focus: To use and practise the language functions of suggesting, describing, sequencing, discussing, agreeing and disagreeing and the vocabulary specific to the topic of the picture used.

Description of activity

Prior to the activity, the teacher should model the process involved and teach the appropriate language structures and vocabulary that learners would be expected to use in this activity.

Learners work in pairs and each partner in the pair is named as A or B.

Each learner is given a version of the drawing/diagram – labelled A or B.

All the A's should have the same version-similarly the B's.

Without looking at each other's drawing/diagram, learners in each pair take turns to ask their partner about their drawing/diagram.

Clarifying questions are asked and further details are given.

Education Department of South Australia, Teaching and Learning Strategies for ESL Learners R-12 (1993)

Matrix tasks

Language functions: stating, identifying, classifying, questioning and suggesting

Description of activity: Matrix tasks may be devised for use across KLA's and year levels. Pairs or groups of students consider information given along the top and sides of a grid or matrix, and fill in the squares appropriately. Information can be recorded in words, sentences or pictures.

Logic matrix

1. Each group of students is given a copy of the logic matrix (below) and the sentences.
2. The teacher may read the logic matrix sentences while students listen and study their matrix but do not write anything.
3. The logic matrix sentences are read by the students, allowing time for students to interpret information and record answers. Students listen carefully and decide what information from the sentence can be used to fill in the matrix. The reader may need to repeat the sentences several times.
4. Once completed, students can read off a description of each person from the matrix.
5. Then the students could attempt to make their own.

Example: All about us

Read the clues and try to complete to complete the matrix about our neighbourhood as a team. When complete check the answers. Then you can create your own about your class mates



Name					
Sport					
Pet					
Hobby					
Favourite Food					

1. Joe, Taj and Alexi are boys.	9. Leah, who likes gardening, enjoys athletics.
2. The sports are basketball, tennis, swimming, soccer and athletics	10. Alexi, who lives between Taj and Leah, plays basketball.
3. No ball game player lives next to another.	11. The boy at no. 12 does not keep mice but he does play chess.
4. The favourite food begins with the same letter as the person's hobby.	12. The mice owner likes to read
5. The foods are cheese, rice, Weet-bix, grapes and avocado.	13. The gardener lives between the art lover and the carpenter.
6. The mice, terrier and parrot live with boys and the canaries and cats live with girls.	14. The swimmer at no. 14 does not eat avocados.
7. The girl at no. 20 plays tennis and keeps a cat.	15. May lives at the end of the street.
8. The boy at no. 16 keeps a bird and does woodwork for a hobby.	All about us – logic matrix

Sequencing tasks

Language focus: Sequencing tasks require students to organise written text, pictures or symbols into an appropriate sequence using linking words which indicate sequence (first, then, next). These tasks can be used to teach KLA content as well as schematic structure of types of texts.

Description of activity: Sequencing tasks can be used after students have read a narrative (play, novel or poem) to consolidate their understanding of plot structure. Create a dot point summary of the plot organised into strips. Photocopy strips, cut them up, put them in an envelope and ask pairs of students to sequence them in the correct order.

Uses: The plot structure of an entire text can be reinforced through sequencing activities. Allocate a chapter from a story, or scene from a play to pairs of students. Ask them to create their own dot point summary, cut it up and put it in an envelope. Rotate pairs so that each one has the opportunity to sequence all chapters/ scenes from the text.

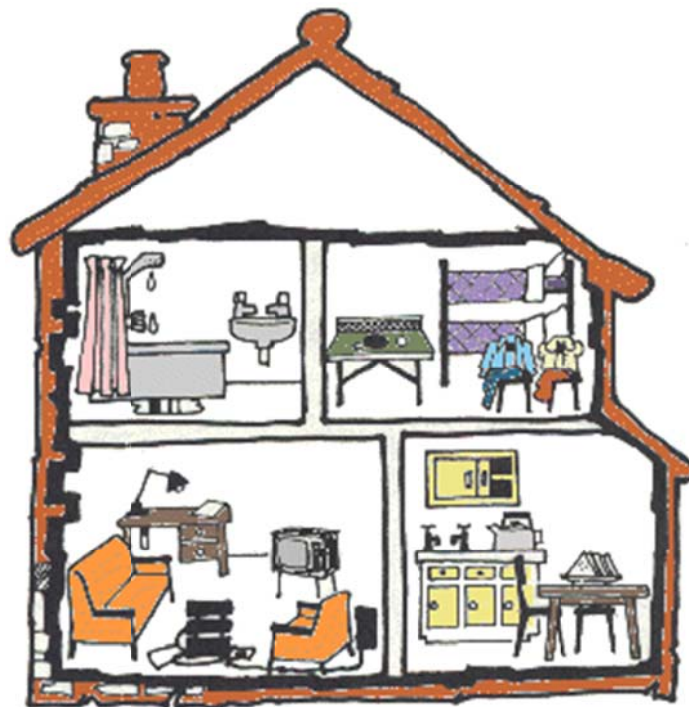
A sequencing activity can also be used to teach and reinforce procedures in Science, eg, the digestive system. Cut the steps in this sequence so that each step is on a separate piece of paper. Supply each group with one complete set of the text; together they reconstruct the text.

Enquiry and elimination tasks

Language focus: Participation in enquiry and elimination tasks provides students with opportunities for oral interaction focusing on asking questions and listening to and interpreting answers in order to decide on relevant information and eliminate irrelevant information.

Description of activity: Students are organised into groups. A large picture, map, story map, or completed matrix is placed in view of whole group. Specific details of the large picture are shown on small cards. In turn each student selects a card. Others ask questions to determine the picture/information shown on the card. Alternatively, a student may begin by stating "I'm thinking of something". Others ask questions to determine what the child is focusing on.

See example



Ranking tasks

Language focus: Giving and asking for a reason, suggesting, agreeing or disagreeing, objecting, arguing by negotiating a list of items in the order of importance or preference.

Ranking tasks require groups or pairs of students to reach consensus in the sequencing of information based on degree or value. These tasks may be used to initiate discussion about a topic.

e.g. 1 Learners rank in order of importance the items needed for a 5 day camp

Procedure:

Prior to the activity, the teacher needs to model the process involved and to teach the appropriate language structures and vocabulary.

Learners are given a list of the items to be taken.

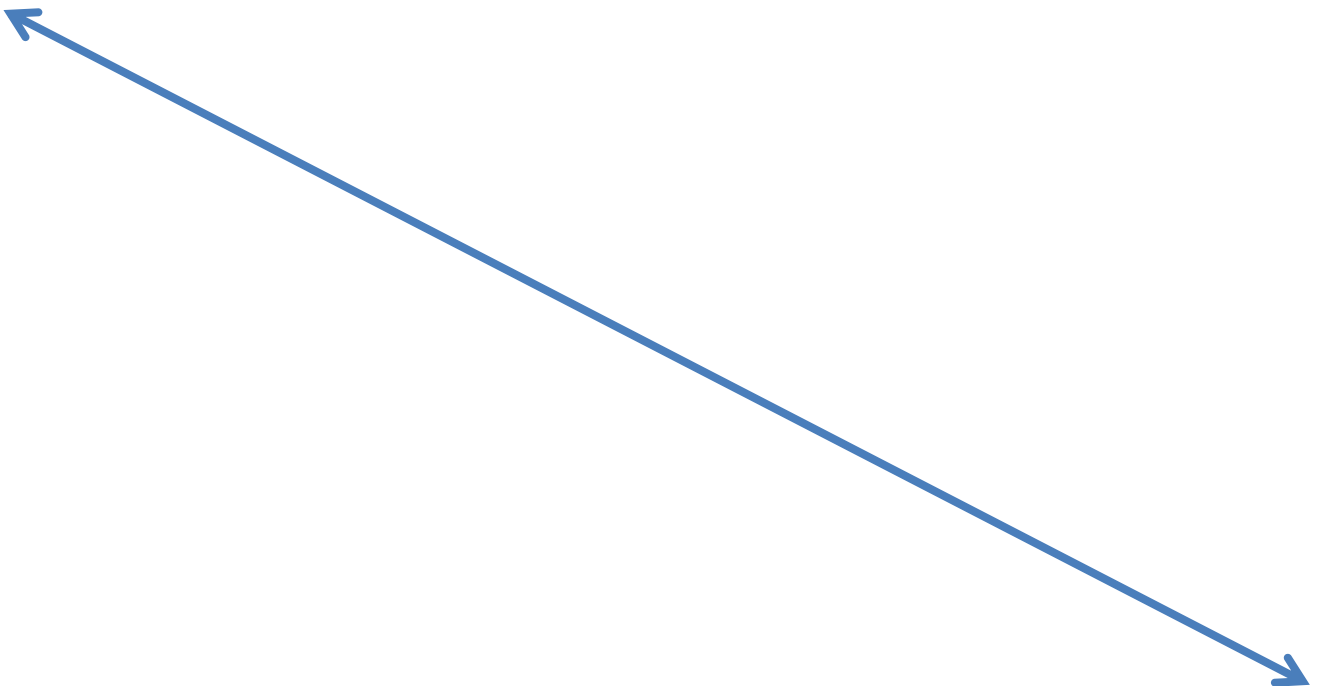
In groups or pairs, learners rank the items in order of importance or suitability.

Learners can then compare their ranking with other groups, giving reasons why they have ranked the items in that particular order.

The first time the activity is carried out, the learners can come together as a whole group in order to make a final ranking which is decided by consensus.

e.g. 2 Cline - Learners rank words related to a theme e.g. hot on a diagonal line (see below) by writing them in and justifying their choices with a partner or group. Students take it in turn to write and justify to share the load and to make it fair.

Hot: warm burning scalding scorching boiling blistering sizzling searing
heated scalding luke-warm sweltering toasty tepid



Communicative reading tasks

i. Structured Overview

A structured overview is an organisation of content words dealing with a topic or text. It is used to illustrate the relationships between the various content words themselves and the topic or text. These content words are rank-ordered from the general (the topic) to the specific and displayed diagrammatically. This gives learners and teachers a framework around which they can organise their learning of a topic or text.

Learners and teachers brainstorm words that relate to the topic. The words are ordered from most general to most specific. The information is then organised into a structured overview. As a communicative activity, a partially completed structured overview might be given to a pair of students to collaboratively complete.

Language focus

Structured overviews activate learners' prior knowledge of a topic helping them to link it with new knowledge. They help learners to see logical relationships between ideas in a text. They help to build language on the topic or text.

Use

A structured overview can be used:

- as an advanced organiser to introduce a topic
- as a pre-reading activity to prepare students to locate information in the text
- to review a learner's progress while studying a topic
- to assess what learners have learnt on completion of a topic

ii. Cloze passages

A cloze is a strategy in which words are deleted from a piece of text and the reader must fill in the blank spaces using words appropriate to the text. The text chosen should not be beyond the independent reading level of the learner. It is necessary for students to understand the function of the deleted word in the sentence. Learners may do the activity in groups, pairs or individually or the teacher and students may work collaboratively.

Language focus

The cloze assists in developing reading and vocabulary skills by making readers use all cueing systems when predicting words. When used as a group activity it encourages communicative skills (eg: suggesting, accepting, negotiating, rejecting). It also encourages discussion of the vocabulary and content of the text.

iii. The three- level guide

The three level guide is a strategy which helps learners to gain a deeper understanding of the text they are reading. The teacher develops a series of statements (not questions) about the text at the three different levels of comprehension (ie: literal, interpretive and applied).

Literal: Statements focus on actual content of the text and help learners focus on what is important information in the text and to discard irrelevant information.

Interpretive: Statements allow learners to reflect upon the information given and to make inferences about the underlying meanings in the text. (Read between the lines)

Applied: Statements allow learners to think beyond the text and relate the information to other situations and to change their own ideas depending on the text. (Read beyond the text)

The teacher introduces one level at a time (literal, then interpretive, then applied) so that learners can gain a good understanding of each level before moving to the next.

iv. Margin questions

Provide students with a focus as they read to alert them to a particular aspect of the text at the word level and at the concept level. Margin questions are a good way to develop specific vocabulary knowledge and to also assist less able readers to focus on what is important in the text.

Communicative writing tasks

Dictogloss

A dictogloss is a writing activity in which learners attempt to reconstruct a short piece of text which has been dictated to them. Learners reconstruct the text from their own background knowledge, and the memory cues from the notes they have taken. They must use their knowledge of grammar in order to complete the task.

Language focus

Dictogloss develops the learners grammatical competence in English through the reconstruction, paraphrasing and analysis of texts. In the group sessions, learners develop communicative language skills as they reconstruct the text together

Procedure

1. Preparation: The teacher builds student knowledge of the context through brainstorming, visual stimulus, teaching unfamiliar vocabulary, learners predicting words in the text.
2. Dictation: The teacher reads the text to students at a normal reading pace and learners listen without taking notes. The teacher reads the text again at a normal pace and this time the students take notes as they listen. Students record only key words.
3. Reconstruction of text: In pairs students reconstruct the text comparing and discussing their individual notes. Two pairs then join to make a group of four. They work together adding and adapting their text.
4. Analysis and correction: The learners analyse and correct their texts comparing theirs with the original. The teacher discusses differences between texts or teaching language knowledge as it arises.